

DESIGNING STRATEGIES

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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Exactly how green is GREEN? Regardless of our views of Al Gore and his global warming crusade, he has managed to bring a topic that had long bubbled in the background to a full boil. It's impossible to pick up a magazine or newspaper, turn on a TV or radio, or log onto the Internet without being confronted about global warming, sustainability, green design, green products or green companies.



Before this flood of information, there were a few companies within our industry making major progress on the sustainability front. Then, seemingly overnight, virtually every company on earth has miraculously become *green*, or at least claim they have. How many could possibly have completely turned themselves around overnight? Even Jim Henson's Kermit the Frog knew "It Isn't Easy Being Green.' It's hard to believe all those claims of overnight *green*. Much of the advertising and marketing for 'green' products at best stretches the truth.

Visualize

In the broadest sense, sustainability is about seeking to reduce negative impact on the environment. The

General Services Administration (GSA) further cites: "The basic objectives of sustainability are to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources, minimize waste, and create healthy, productive environments."

Simply changing a few incandescent lamps to fluorescents, switching to recycled paper for a copy machine or putting a container in the employee lounge to recycle aluminum soda cans hardly makes a firm *green*. You might be surprised at the number of companies making minimal changes, then advertising and marketing themselves as having 'gone green'. While these are baby steps in the right direction, these firms may well find themselves under the scrutiny of today's savvy consumers, or one of the pro-green groups that investigate alleged new 'green' products and manufacturers, for accuracy and honesty.



Manufacturers across a broad spectrum of industries are anxious to cash in on the green movement. Large numbers of new *green* products have hit the market in the past five years, many of which are far from truly being *green*. To match this influx of products, certification groups are popping up like furry critters in a Whack-a-Mole game. It's not surprising that all the standards and certifications are not created equal. In many cases they only serve to confuse consumers. Hopefully over time the numbers and types of certification groups will be whittled down to a few valid and recognizable certifications.

Just how green is your company? Have you committed yet to becoming a friend of the environment? What changes have you made in your operations and facilities to reduce your carbon footprint? Have you done anything to reduce energy usage for lighting, HVAC and plant operations? Have you implemented recycling in your workplace? How about your products? Are they as green as your marketing leads people to believe? Have you found eco-friendly or recycled materials for your product lines? Reduced VOCs or found ways to comply with cradle-to-cradle or cradle-to-grave standards? Found ways to eliminate waste, recycle it or find ways to use it? It's not hard to see how many facets there are to becoming a green organization.

As the saying goes, "Anything worth doing is worth doing right." It takes time and planning to change a company's culture, its facilities, operations and products into a completely environmentally friendly organization. It takes time and effort to do the necessary research or engage specialists to move in an eco-friendly direction. If you have not yet decided to undertake changes to save our environment, today is the day to begin. By all means, take those simple baby steps as a way to get started, but include goals and strategies in your strategic plan for becoming sustainable. Plan to leave those strategies in place for as long as it takes to accomplish full compliance.

Email Enquiries...



Recently someone wrote and asked me for some advice on issues related to internal communication and employee engagement.

One of the biggest issues that affects both internal communication and employee engagement is *generational diversity*. There is no longer a 'one size fits all' approach that will work for the four different generations currently working together in the workplace. Methods of recruiting and managing

these diverse groups are also different. Things have definitely become more complex and complicated - *NOT IMPOSSIBLE* - just more complex and complicated.

Two of my most popular programs are, "Managing An Age Diverse Workforce" and "The Changing Marketplace: Selling To The Generations." Both have been successfully presented to sold out crowds around the country. For information on these and other available programs, please contact me directly at 330.666.0802 or tlmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com.

Also, feel free to email me your questions. If space permits, they will be answered in future issues of **Designing Strategies**.

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